



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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IM Weekly Highlights



- The shelter foundation is completed and construction on the tower foundation is underway at the Williams Coulee site in Garfield County.
- Brian Sewell, IM Project Manager, met with the contactor at the Belle Prairie site to finalize shelter and tower locations so work can commence.
- Roger Smith completed software upgrades on the eastern end of the Northern Tier, from Culberson to Scobey. He will be working with Flathead County on the Big Mountain site and pushing out subscriber unit upgrades on the western portion of the Northern Tier microwave system shortly.

IM Finance Committee Re-Visits Short-Term User Fee Proposal

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Bill Fleiner, Acting Chair, reported at the Mon., Nov. 8 meeting of the IM Finance Committee that the IM has learned it is not feasible to use DHS FY07 grant funds to reimburse counties for user fees. Members were informed about how the IM Budget will be impacted if additional funding is not secured, including the possible inability to perform the financial audit and to prepare financial statements and tax filings. Funding options were identified to cover the shortfall to get the IM through June 30, 2011.

Ian Marquand, IM Public Affairs, reviewed result of the summer outreach meetings and indicated that virtually everyone approved user fees as the preferred and most fair method of funding the IM system. Work sessions will take place to further review and discuss funding options.

Members also reviewed a comprehensive list of ideas for re-directing remaining DHS FY07 grant funds. After discussion, a recommendation was made to direct the monies towards the purchase of narrowband repeaters and base stations, with priority being given to jurisdictions that have not previously benefitted from IM support. Members then discussed the benefits and weaknesses of seeking legislative support for a legislative appropriation, and voted to move this idea forward to the IM Project Directors.

Copies of the All-Source Funding Report were distributed. Bill indicated that local contributions, not including personnel costs, continue to be under reported,

and he emphasized the importance of obtaining a more accurate estimate of these expenditures. Members also reviewed the IM Budget, which is updated quarterly.

Kevin Bruski reported that an award letter for PSIC-funded infrastructure at Shane Ridge has been issued as well as two awards to Richland County for the Antelope Butte and Fox Creek sites. Members provided Kevin with clarification on details for the Second Master Controller award letter to Richland County since it is a temporary award. Discussion took place on the pros and cons of awarding an IM system asset to an individual jurisdiction. A provision may be needed in the award letter to allow it to be transferred back to the IM. Kevin also has written a draft extension for the FY07 DHS funds because two sites are waiting for NEPA approvals and money has not yet been spent for flash upgrades and exercises.

Under vendor and agency reports, Dave Larsen, DES, reported that he is beginning planning for monitoring visits. Ron Spencer, Motorola, said that he is looking forward to continuing good communications with the IM. He also said that coverage maps are complete. Larry Irwin, Montana Highway Patrol (MHP), said that MHP is interested in participating in work sessions to consider assistance options for the IM.

The next IM Finance Committee meeting will be held on Mon., Dec. 13 from 9:00 am to noon at the offices of Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd., in Helena. A possibility exists that this meeting date may be changed to an earlier one.

IM Governance Committee Approves Bylaws Changes

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Members of the IM Governance Committee (IMGC) reviewed and approved bylaws changes at its Mon., Nov. 8 meeting in Helena. In addition, they drafted language for the Interim Study Commission legislative bill.

George Gupton, Staffing Sub-Committee Chair, advised that at the close of the IM Project Director's meeting, the board will go into Executive Session to complete Kevin Bruski's performance evaluation as the IM Executive Director. He also reported that work is progressing on the technical position job description. Members also learned that a meeting was held with Carroll College to discuss using their internship program to provide administrative assistance for the IM.

Kevin reported on revisions to the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). He recently sent an e-mail asking for suggestions on how individual jurisdictions will meet Goal 2 of the National Emergency Communications Plan: to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one-hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies. The requirement is 75% nationwide. He is

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

seeking information on exercises, events or actual incidents that involved multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional communications in which the operational leadership was able to talk within one hour.

The first meeting of the IM Training Sub-Committee is scheduled Nov. 23 to begin planning for the Northern Tier exercise. A training session will be held Nov. 16-18 in Townsend on the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). Under the Outreach and Communication report, Ian Marquand, IM Public Affairs, displayed mock-ups of different website designs and sought input.

The next meeting of the IMGC will be Mon., Dec. 13 from 1:00 - 5:00 pm. Bill advised that this meeting date may change to an earlier time frame.

IM Project Directors Approve Bill Language

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

IM Project Directors (IMPD) approved revised language for a draft Interim Study Commission legislative bill at its Tues., Nov. 9 meeting in Helena. This draft bill will be introduced by Rep. Edith McClafferty at the upcoming legislature in January and is very important to seek long-term funding strategies.

In other business, members reviewed and made changes to the latest IM Business Plan. After an electronic vote, the document will be posted to the <http://interop.mt.gov> website. Members also reviewed and commented on proposed bylaws changes. A vote on the changes will take place at the next meeting.

Board members heard reports from the IM Finance, Governance and Technical Committees. Under the finance discussion, members rescinded a portion of last month's action of funding first-year user fees with DHS FY07 grant funds because new information from DHS suggests such an expenditure does not comply with grant guidance. Instead, members voted to re-allocate DHS FY07 grant funds to purchase narrowband repeaters and base stations and to give priority to jurisdictions that have not previously benefitted from IM support. A motion brought forth from the IM Finance Committee to support a legislative appropriations request was not acted upon.

Board members also were updated on the Audit Committee findings, which were positive overall and provided a few suggestions for improvements, such as checking prospective vendors to determine if they have been suspended or debarred from conducting business in the state.

IM Executive Director Kevin Bruski gave an update on grant activities and reported that all Northern Tier sites have been turned up, most microwave issues have been resolved and generator fuel supply systems have been retrofitted. IM staff is working hard to get subscriber units upgraded so they may be added to the system. The 60-day test period with Aviat Networks has begun again. Richland County has started modifications on the Law and Justice Center that will house the Second Master Controller. Kevin also indicated that some site

development work is on hold waiting for NEPA approvals.

Ian Marquand, IM Public Affairs, reported on MACo's endorsement of a legislative interim study committee, preparation work on a 2010 progress report for 2010 and new website ideas.

The next IMPD meeting is scheduled for Tues., Dec. 14 from 9:00 to 3:00 in Helena

Upcoming Meetings

• Tues.-Thurs., Nov. 16-18

Western Border Interoperability Working Group
Regina, SK • Hosted by the Ministry of Corrections,
Public Safety and Policing
RCMP Depot, 6101 Dewdney Ave.
POCs: Kevin Roche kevin.roche@gov.sk.ca
E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

• Tues.-Thurs., Nov. 16, 17 & 18

November CASM Training
Online • 11:00 am – noon
○ Tues., Nov. 16-Gateways & Radio Cache Data Entry
○ Wed., Nov. 17 – Tips on Improving Data Completeness
○ Thurs., Nov. 18 – TICP Report & ICS-217A
Generation

<https://franz.spawar.navy.mil/forums/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=103>

• Wed., Nov. 17

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMICC)
Bozeman • 10:00 am - noon
Bozeman Fire Station 3, 1705 Vaquero Parkway

• Thurs., Nov. 18

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium
Butte • 10:00 am – noon
Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.

• Mon., Nov. 22

IM Technical Committee (IMTC)
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Offices, 2715 Skyway Dr.

• Wed., Nov. 23

Tri-County Consortium
Helena • 10:00 am - noon
IM Offices, 2717 Skyway Dr.

• Tues., Nov. 30

State Agency Radio Users Task Force
Helena • 9:00 – 10:30 am
Rm. 109, Old Livestock Building, 1310 E. Lockey St.

• Thurs., Dec. 2

Big Sky 11 Consortium
Billings • 9:00 am Tech. Committee
• 10:00 am Consortium
Yellowstone County EOC, 2305 8th Ave. North

• Sun-Wed., Dec. 5-8

4th Canadian Public Safety Interoperability Workshop
A CITIG National Forum "From Action to Results"
Victoria, BC • www.cacp.ca
The Fairmont Empress, 721 Government Street

• Thurs., Dec. 9

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)
Great Falls • 10:00 am
Disaster & Emergency Services Office, 521 1st St. NW